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# 115 QUESTIONS

FORMULATING YOUR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

**BCA**

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF  
COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

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QUESTIONS TO ANSWER AS YOU PLAN  
FOR YOUR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Inspired by "Let's Measure Up", Boston Volunteer Bureau  
and  
Board of the Volunteer Bureau - Voluntary Action Center  
of Great Seattle,

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BEFORE YOU START TO RECRUIT:

- Are you convinced about the importance of your agency to the community?
- Have you found a way to communicate this conviction and information to others?
- Are you clear as to why you need volunteers? How you will use them?
- Are you recruiting for jobs that will give the volunteer satisfaction as well as being helpful to the agency?
- Have you a special plan for orientation?
- Has the staff who will be working with volunteers helped in the planning?

TO ATTRACT POTENTIAL VOLUNTEERS, DO YOU MAKE YOUR AGENCY'S NEEDS KNOWN THROUGH:

- Brochures?
- Newspaper articles?
- Radio and TV announcements?
- Talks to groups?
- Come-and-see tours?

DO YOU USE A VARIETY OF SOURCES FOR OBTAINING VOLUNTEERS SUCH AS:

- Your Board members?
- Friends of your volunteers?
- Community leaders of ethnic groups?
- Neighborhood people?
- Churches?
- Satisfied clients?
- Volunteer Bureau/Voluntary Action Center?



HAVE YOU TRIED USING NEW VOLUNTEER POTENTIAL BY CONTACTING:

- High school and college students?
- Retirees?
- Employed men and women?
- Club groups?
- Low-income people?
- Unemployed men and women?

IS YOUR AGENCY FLEXIBLE ENOUGH TO ACCOMODATE PROGRAM TO:

- The hours that volunteers have available?
- The particular services or skills that individuals or groups of volunteers have to offer?
- Those people who are trying to meet special needs of their own?





ARE YOUR VOLUNTEER INFORMATION SHEETS DESIGNED TO:

- Gather only pertinent data?
- Discover the volunteer's particular capabilities, interests, experiences, limitations (as to time, energy, abilities)?
- Be helpful during the interviewing process?

DO YOU PLAN INTERVIEWS WITH VOLUNTEERS BEFORE THEY START WORK IN YOUR AGENCY:

- With qualified person (staff or volunteer)?
- In appropriate setting with plenty of time?

DO YOU HAVE AN ORIENTATION/SHARING MEETING SO THAT VOLUNTEERS:

- Are sufficiently informed as to the agency's purpose, program, philosophy, and service capacities?
- Understand what their time commitments will be?
- Know their job is essential?
- Know how it fits into the total agency picture?
- Realize the importance of continuity of service?

IF A PARTICULAR SERVICE A VOLUNTEER WISHES TO PERFORM CANNOT BE USED:

- Do you offer alternate volunteer opportunities: with your agency, or other agencies, or through your Voluntary Action Center?

IS THE VOLUNTEER INFORMED OF YOUR PLANS FOR IN-SERVICE TRAINING BY:

- Periodic volunteer meetings?
- Discussion sessions?
- Invitations to pertinent workshops?
- Suggested reading materials?

DO YOU STRESS THE OPPORTUNITY FOR SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH EXPERIENCE?



HAVE YOU PREPARED MANUALS OR OTHER LITERATURE TO HELP VOLUNTEERS KEEP IN MIND THE THINGS THEY NEED TO KNOW?

DO YOU GIVE CAREFUL THOUGHT TO WHICH PEOPLE (STAFF, VOLUNTEER, CLIENT) MIGHT WORK BEST TOGETHER?

WHEN VOLUNTEERS ARE ASSIGNED TO A SPECIFIC JOB, DO YOU DESIGN WITH THEM A GOOD CLEAR JOB DESCRIPTION, INCLUDING:

- Where, when, to whom to report?
- How many hours they work?
- What training is required (or available) to develop skills and information? Also, where, when, how often?
- What equipment to bring?
- What is expected to them in terms of:
  - Continuity of service?
  - Confidentiality?
  - Attitude toward clients or patients?
  - Relationship to staff?
  - Behavior?
  - Appearance?

DO YOU WELCOME THE VOLUNTEER BY:

- Acquainting them with the facilities?
- Giving them a place to work and keep their belongings?
- Introducing them to staff members, department heads, and volunteers with whom they will be working?
- Giving staff support for the initial contact between volunteer and client (program consumer, participant)?

DO YOU DISCUSS A TERMINATION DATE FOR A SPECIFIC ASSIGNMENT?

DO YOU LEAVE A VOLUNTEER FREE TO REFUSE AN ASSIGNMENT?

ARE BOTH STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS INFORMED OF THE CHANNELS FOR HANDLING TENSIONS OR MISUNDERSTANDINGS IN WORKING RELATIONSHIPS?



## SUPERVISION

IS THE CHAIN OF COMMAND IN YOUR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM CLEARLY ESTABLISHED:

- Is one person, either staff member or volunteer, designated as the overall director of the volunteer program?
- Do your volunteers know to whom they are immediately responsible:
  - To report to work?
  - To turn to for help and advice?
  - To call when unable to be present?

IS THERE ALWAYS SOME EXPERIENCED PERSON AVAILABLE TO WORK WITH NEW VOLUNTEERS AND SHOW THEM WHAT TO DO?

DO YOU KEEP TRACK OF HOW VOLUNTEERS ARE GETTING ALONG IN THEIR JOBS THROUGH:

- An adequate system of records?
- Personal conferences?
- Contact with the supervisory personnel?

DO YOU COMMEND THE VOLUNTEER WHO IS DOING WELL?

DO YOU HELP THE VOLUNTEER WHO IS NOT DOING WELL BY BUILDING UP INTEREST, INCREASING SKILLS, INSTILLING CONFIDENCE, REARRANGING RESPONSIBILITIES?

ARE CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION ALWAYS OPEN BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR VOLUNTEERS?

DO YOUR VOLUNTEERS KNOW WHEN AND WHERE YOU CAN BE REACHED?

DO YOUR STAFF MEMBERS CONTINUALLY EXAMINE AND TRY TO IMPROVE THEIR PROCEDURES BY:

- Attending workshops on volunteering?
- Talking to volunteer supervisors from other agencies or areas of service?
- Consulting the Volunteer Bureau/Voluntary Action Center

## FACILITATION

### TRANSPORTATION

Can your agency either

- provide transportation?
- coordinate car pools?

### MEALS

IF THE JOB SITE IS TOO FAR A DISTANCE TO RETURN HOME FOR MEALS CAN YOUR AGENCY PROVIDE A MEAL?



## ASSIMILATION

DO YOU ENCOURAGE YOUR VOLUNTEERS TO FEEL AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE AGENCY BY:

- Sharing their feelings and making suggestions?
- Taking part in general agency meetings, occasional staff meetings and all special agency projects?
- Including them in coffee breaks, etc.?

ARE VOLUNTEERS KEPT INFORMED OF AGENCY NEWS AND ANY CHANCES IN AGENCY PROGRAMS?

## RECOGNITION

DO YOU GIVE VOLUNTEERS MEANINGFUL RECOGNITION BY:

- Expressing appreciation from staff and supervisors?
- Formal and informal, personal and public?
- Publicizing their achievements?

ARE THE VOLUNTEERS IDENTIFIED WHILE ON THE JOB SO THAT CLIENTS AND STAFF KNOW WHO THEY ARE BY:

- Name tags?
- Uniforms?
- Pins?

## REVIEW OF ASSIGNMENT

ARE YOUR VOLUNTEERS ASSIGNED TO A SPECIFIC JOB FOR A "TRIAL PERIOD" AT THE END OF WHICH THEY MAY:

- Continue in the same job?
- Be assigned to another?
- Withdraw altogether?

DO YOU RECOGNIZE THAT MISPLACEMENT MAY CAUSE UNSATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE AND TRY TO GIVE VOLUNTEERS ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY TO USE THEIR SKILLS PRODUCTIVELY?

DO YOUR VOLUNTEERS HAVE OPPORTUNITIES?

- To change from one type of service to another?
- To learn new skills?
- To assume positions of greater responsibility?

DO VOLUNTEERS FEEL COMFORTABLE ABOUT?

- Terminating their service with the agency?
- Seeking experience in another agency?
- Conferring with the Volunteer Bureau (VAC) for new opportunities?

DO YOU MAKE EFFORTS TO SEE THAT VOLUNTEERS TERMINATE THEIR SERVICE WITH A POSITIVE FEELING TOWARD THE AGENCY?





DOES YOUR TOTAL PLAN FOR AGENCY OPERATION INCLUDE A PERIODIC EVALUATION OF THE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM?

DO STAFF, CLIENTS, VOLUNTEERS ALL PARTICIPATE IN THE EVALUATION?

IN EVALUATING THE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM, DO YOU INCLUDE:

- Reassessment of the need for the program?
- A look at the structure as well as the content?
- Consideration of staff time required for the volunteer programs?
- Recognition of problems encountered?

IS THE USE OF VOLUNTEERS IN YOUR AGENCY EXAMINED IN TERMS OF:

- Enriching your existing program?
- Extending services?
- Inaugurating new services?
- Interpreting the program to the community?

DO YOU SHARE THE INFORMATION GAINED FROM THE EVALUATIONS WITH ALL PARTICIPANTS AND INTERESTED COMMUNITY?

DO YOU HAVE A DEFINITE PLAN FOR TRANSLATING THESE EVALUATIONS INTO CHANGES OF POLICY, PROCESS, OR PROGRAM?





